

Integrated Marketing Communications Plan Outline

1.0 Executive Summary

The Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) plan for Acru seeks to increase brand awareness within both the local and global communities. Informing the community of Acru's value while targeting small businesses, Acru's top segment is key. The plan specifically seeks to (1) Increase web traffic on main webpage by 200 unique visitors in 3 months, (2) Increase blog interactions (comments/subscribers) to 20 per month within 2 months, (3) Reach 15 local businesses per month through cross-promotion for 3 months, which specifically addresses the target segments, (4) Increase reach of coffeehouse patrons by 10% of daily traffic within 1 month, and (5) Increase event attendees by 10% within 3 events.

The goals are geared towards increasing overall awareness of Acru while specifically targeting the two Most Important Customer (MIC) segments; these segments are Optimizers and Outsourcers of high net worth. Optimizers want to be hands on when dealing with financial planning while Outsourcers wish to be no touch as they are too busy with their business to deal with crafting a financial plan. Both segments understand and acknowledge the need for financial planning. Acru will position itself as being the thought leader through the use of social media.

The social media that will be deployed includes Facebook, Twitter, Blogs/Vlogs, Youtube, Foursquare, Mobile Marketing, and LinkedIn. Some of the services are already in use, but require tweaking to achieve optimal results. In addition to social media, Table Toppers for use inside the coffeehouse and QR codes that link to Acru's various sites are recommended. Samples can be found in the Appendices section. The timeline for the entirety of the IMC is approximately 3 months to get everything up and running. Managing the social media sites will continue in perpetuity and will require time investments to maintain and be used properly.

If used correctly, the social media sites can drive traffic to Acru's main website. Combining social media sites (and QR Codes) with the powerful videos on the Acru website will increase awareness and as a direct result, should increase the number of customers who use Acru. Social media will also serve two other purposes. First, social media sites will establish Acru as the thought leader in the combined financial planning services world. Second, social media sites will help Acru reach more people while developing trusted relationships with them. Trust is a vital tool for Acru. Social media sites will allow Acru to be the go to source for information on financial planning in the community and even among online viewers. Lastly, measurement tools such as Google Analytics will allow Acru to decipher which types of advertising and social media are responded to by various segments, including MIC segments.

2.0 Marketing Communications Objectives

The Marketing Communications Objectives (MCO) are designed to inform the community of Acru's value while targeting small businesses, which fall under Acru's MIC segments. Five MCO's have been created for Acru. Each one will be specifically linked to ads and social media site usage which is detailed in the New Media section. The MCO's are as follows:

1. Increase web traffic on main webpage by 200 unique visitors in 3 months
2. Increase blog interactions (comments/subscribers) to 20 per month within 2 months
3. Reach 15 local businesses per month through cross-promotion for 3 months. *Specifically addressing the target segment*
4. Increase reach of coffeehouse patrons by 10% of daily traffic within 1 month
5. Increase event attendees by 10% within 3 events

3.0 Situation Analysis

Company

Acru is a wholly owned subsidiary of First Cherokee State Bank. Acru acts as a staging front for customer relations. FCSB earns money on Net Interest Margin from deposits and loans and earns money from services provided to customers by Acru. Acru's main purpose is to generate customers for the five service offerings of FCSB. These include Banking, Insurance, Taxes, Investments, and Planning. Acru is registered as a trust company. Acru earns custodial fees from accounts they bring in or service. The employees are salaried employees, which decreases the incentive to sell services and employees are instead encouraged to help customers get the plan that's right for them. In terms of life insurance, Acru earns one time fees plus a recurring fee from active policy holders. Ultimately, Acru differentiates itself by offering Wealth Strategists to plan out everything while offering all five services in one location. No other financial planning company does that.

Acru owns the coffeehouse that is located inside the building and have an operating partner run it. Acru also owns the name Copper Coin Coffee and uses the business to drive traffic to Acru. The coffeehouse draws in 80% more people than Acru reaches, so the potential for the company to increase its customer base exists. Acru was founded via focus group suggestions. FCSB conducted focus groups and due to responses, Acru was formed to assist customers with financial planning services.

Competition

Acru believes that "Wisdom shouldn't be sold, it should be shared". The company does not have any full competition. However, the company has several competitors that offer some of the same services offered by Acru. Bank of America, Wells Fargo, and any other major bank that offers similar services to Acru is a direct competitor. Indirect competition comes from stocks, bonds, and other investments. In all reality, any company could copy what Acru offers and this poses a significant threat to Acru the company does not establish itself virtually as a thought leader in the industry. If Acru proves to be successful, there are major banks like Bank of America that could integrate everything Acru does into a service offering of its own.

Context

Currently, the financial market is a place of uncertainty for investors and even regular consumers. Dealing with a recession, many financial scandals and corporate bailouts, financial consumers have become un-trusting of financial establishments. Coupled with un-trusting feelings, consumers now have less financial resources and need financial advice but at a cheap price. Consumers are now more concerned than ever with their finances. Many consumers are becoming unsatisfied with the current services being offered at Acru's competitors, mostly mega-banks. There is no feeling of personal service anymore, but instead there is a feeling that the customer is just an account number. Also, with new technologies the ability to easily comparison shop for financial services has become much easier.

Customers

Acru's customers are looking for a well trusted financial advisor that isn't necessarily concerned with selling, but instead want to help the customer. Acru has done an extreme amount of research regarding their potential customers. Acru had focus groups with clients from the bank where Acru was told exactly what these potential customers were looking for in a financial service broker. Another great thing learned from these focus groups was that customers are willing to pay more for exceptional relationships and services. Acru sees anyone as a customer because sometime in life we all need some financial direction.

Collaborators

Acru has several collaborators. Acru is a subsidiary of First Cherokee State Bank (FCSB). In other words, FCSB handles the money and backend processes while Acru attempts to sell the services. In fact, Acru keeps a host of experts behind closed doors in the back to provide the services to interested parties. Copper Coin Coffee is an operating partner of Acru. FCSB owns the coffeehouse and the name Copper Coin Coffee. The coffeehouse serves as a method to bring in more people which Acru hopes to attract a portion of. Locally, Acru also collaborates with local businesses to host events. The events are goodwill generators that Acru uses to build a sense of trust and community.

S.W.O.T.

The S.W.O.T. analysis is used to determine Acru's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Acru's biggest strength lies with the Wealth Strategist. These individuals act as experts to the customer and work to establish a sense of trust. The Wealth strategists do not sell the services, but instead help a customer to get the right package specifically for them from the various financial experts in the back. Some other strengths include being trusted by customers, having excellent market research skills, learning quickly from mistakes and having the first mover advantage. The excellent market research skills allow Acru to target precise segments of the market and gear advertising to them. This saves the company money, which they are in short supply of.

The weaknesses of Acru are mainly related to inexperience. The company is new and admittedly has issues with processes not being fully developed. Acru "fails fast" so that they can improve quickly. Also, the company lacks competition to benchmark. No company does things exactly like Acru. However, the company can benchmark relatively similar competition or even businesses not in the same field. Acru has several opportunities. The company currently only reaches 20% of the people that enter

the coffeehouse leaving room for 80% more people. Acru can become the thought leaders in the industry if they take time to network via social media. Acru can put up traditional marketing material like in store signage, ads, and table toppers to let people know they exist. Events can be marketed through social media and present Acru with the opportunity to build trust with potential clients. Lastly, Acru's threats are limited. The company has several direct competitors, but none offer the entire array of services offered by Acru. Yet, these companies present a very real threat. They could easily convert their service offering to match Acru's if the company succeeds. The "me too" threat is always looming over companies that are successful. A small threat to Acru could also be a financial downturn in the economy, though that impacts almost all businesses. Finally, the company could suffer from some unexpected issue caused by their internal processes not being fully developed.

4.0 Research

The MIC was defined by Acru as being individuals who were small business owners of high net worth. Another MIC is simply individuals of high net worth. Acru had segmented the market into five distinct groups. First was the Unaware segment, which consisted of people who do not know they need financial planning services. Typically these individuals are young and/or of low net worth. Second, Acru serves the Hopeful segment, which is defined as being individuals who stick their money in something and hope for the best. These individuals range from low net worth to high net worth. Acru doesn't like to just throw money at things and hope it turns out well, so Acru tries to direct them to make well educated decisions. The Savvy segment knows they need financial planning and already has a complete plan in place. They require little assistance from Acru in order to achieve financial success. The two MIC segments are the Outsourcers and Optimizers. Outsourcers are individuals that are too busy to handle their finances, but know that they need financial planning. These individuals would likely be small business owners. Optimizers are almost polar opposites. Whereas Outsourcers want little to no interaction with Acru past the initial meeting, Optimizers want to have their hands in every decision. These individuals may be small business owners, but have free time on their hands.

Further research was conducted by surveying 5 local businesses around Woodstock; Vincenzo's Italian Restaurant, RescueScapes Inc., Wood & Fullerton Goodyear Tire, Big Box Tickets and Outspoken. We felt that this mix of small businesses was the MIC that Acru would be marketing towards. From the surveys we came to the following conclusions. MICs would prefer to be marketed to via word of mouth referrals and independent internet research. MICs would want to gain more knowledge of Acru via Acru's website and other internet resources such as Facebook or LinkedIn. The MICs would want to know what the value proposition of Acru is and what exactly Acru could do that isn't already being done by someone else.

All 5 of the MICs had never heard of Acru or knew anything about its offerings before our survey. Once we directed all 5 MICs to Acru's website, 4 were "very interested" in learning more about Acru and its offerings. Based on this research we recommended that Acru implement a brand awareness campaign to ensure their company's value is being portrayed to as many local small businesses as possible.

5.0 IMC Campaign Strategy

The overall strategy of the IMC is to increase general awareness of Acru while establishing the company as a trusted thought leader in the industry. The MIC's for Acru consist of two segments, Outsourcers and Optimizers. These two segments are composed primarily of individuals who are ready to accept financial planning advice. Many small business owners fit into one of these two target segments. As small business owners, they are likely to use social media sites to promote their own businesses. Likewise, these businesses are local to Acru and benefit from having a local, well trusted financial planning service that only costs them time to use. As Acru has a wide array of service offerings, Acru can fit any schedule and can offer any service those businesses may need all in one stop. This offers a time value savings to these business owners whom often have very little spare time. Stakeholders in the company may not fully understand the benefits of social media, however, they will likely understand that companies that employ social media effectively tend to fare better in their industry than companies that rely solely on traditional advertising.

Social media appeals to such a wide audience and provides Acru with feedback from various customers and the general public. Acru can avoid policy change fiascos by simply posting a message on Facebook or Twitter and seeing what kind of feedback they receive. In addition to social media's ability to reach large numbers of people quickly, it is cheap. Social media advertising costs a fraction of what traditional media costs. Social media can generate new leads at a substantially lower rate if done correctly. Social media will appeal to the various market segments as there are very few people who don't know of or use social media. Even stakeholders are likely to use social media to keep tabs on what's happening in the industry. By providing a direct line of communication with the general public, stakeholders can begin to get a better understanding of how social media is effective and how it will help Acru increase its customer base.

6.0 Creative Brief

The main idea is to use various social media avenues to increase the overall awareness of local public. In the same manner, Acru's concept is going to be displayed to anyone that follows them on social media sites. Social media appeals to a wide range of people from young to old and thus the reach of social media is gigantic if done correctly. Linking various social media sites together as a package will help intrigue larger portions of the general public while allowing Acru to gather as much data as possible. Likewise, the social media can help establish Acru as a thought leader and build their trust within the digital community. Being the thought leader in a financial capacity is a powerful position to be in.

The MIC's, Outsourcers and Optimizers, are mainly small businesses and individuals of high net worth. In the local Woodstock area, Acru wants to target small businesses as the majority fit in one of the MIC segments and are easily identifiable. The segments are large enough to target and should be receptive to financial planning services. Social media should appeal to business owners as it gives them a direct line to important news and updates in the financial word. Establishing Acru as the thought leader via social media will position the company to become fully trusted by customers. At the same time, social media will allow for personal references from one small business to another, which is the top way that small business owners want to find out about financial planning services. In other words, success breeds success for Acru. Social media also appeals to a large majority of the general public. Although not every person is in the MIC segments, they are still potential clients for Acru that may be satisfied with the services and spread the word that Acru is great. Social media is so powerful when it

comes to spreading a message and building trust, both of which are vital to Acru.

7.0 Advertising

Advertising is being handled by combining several forms of social media with new trends and technology to give Acru the highest chance of success. Acru will begin to utilize Direct Response E-mails, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs/Vlogs, Youtube, Foursquare, QR Codes, and even some special in-store ads and promotions such as Table Toppers and Coffeehouse Receipt promotions. The general trend for the ads is to present potential clients with something that appears stylish and functional. For the social media sites, clients are presented with stylish layouts and content that should elicit a sense of trust. The actual ads and mock-ups can be seen as appendices in section 14.

8.0 Direct Response Email

Renowned consultant Diane Cossie says, “There is very little point in getting traffic to your website if none of the visitors pick up the phone, subscribe to your offer or newsletter or buy your product or service.” Strategically, marketers should ask themselves, “What value can I provide to my customer that is important enough to warrant inclusion in their inner circle?” Marketers should also promote the value they add. Relaying their blue ocean advantage gives them a leg up on the competition. Marketers should try to make whatever it is that they’re asking their audience to do as easy as possible. I work for a software company that specializes in testing solutions. We’re certainly not the industry leader although we do rank in the top four of our market. One ingenious thing we do offer a 15-30 trial of our solutions to new customers. This is a great way to create interest in our company and gauge interest while gaining feedback from prospective customers who presumably have a need for our products. Unfortunately, we require two full screens of information about anyone leveraging our trials and the actual link to the trials may be five screens into our website. This causes us to lose an unknown number of prospective customers as they are not willing to go through these cumbersome screens. This same logic can be applied to the responses that we are soliciting from customers with direct response emails. Lastly, anyone using direct response emails should solicit insight from their MIC. This will help the marketers to understand what the MIC will want to see and hear and also about the format that will bring about the most favorable response.

Best practices for direct response email begin with having a compelling subject line. The first sentence should frame who you are and establish rapport. The email should stay on topic and get to the point. The message delivered should be consistent with the message delivered by other tools used in the marketing mix as not to confuse the customer. Marketers should work to provide value at times and not waste the time that the customer has given you. If the customer views you as wasting their time, you probably will not be given another opportunity. A direct response email should not attempt to sell stuff every time or come across as overly salesy. Lastly, marketers should coordinate direct response email initiatives with their traditional marketing efforts as not to over-communicate their message.

The next logical question is “To whom do we send these direct response emails?” We suggest that marketers begin with their internal CRM database. In the case of Acru this would be

SalesForce.com. Next, marketers should solicit referrals from existing customers and offer incentives for those who attend open houses or bring in new customers. The Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce is a great source for new businesses throughout the county. Outside of Acru, the local county's Chamber can provide the same information. A coupon program with Copper Coin Coffee is another great marketing tool in that Acru can route the customer to their website or some other "opt-in" marketing tool to redeem the coupon. We also advise partnerships with other local businesses where Acru is sharing information on marketing efforts. Lastly, they can consider local 3rd party marketing resources who can help to provide more detailed market research and even help to identify quality leads.

9.0 Public Relations

Public relations is defined as a management function which identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between the organization and the public upon which its success or failure depends. The u in Acru is a very good start. Acru wants to be known as a customer/community centric contributor to their surrounding area. As a trusted advisor, they should highlight people who have benefited from their services and are willing to share their stories. This builds trust and confidence in their brand. In regards to frequency, this can come in a quarterly newsletter and be featured in a "Our Customers" tab on their website. Ideally, these people will follow Acru on Twitter and Facebook and feel comfortable posting testimonials. By becoming an information resource, people will receive their marketing efforts favorably. This will lead to word of mouth social marketing. A sample public relations message is found in the Appendices.

10.0 New Media

Mobile Marketing

The big idea of the mobile marketing is to reach out to the relatively untapped customer base. Mobile Marketing encompasses a wide range of advertising via mobile devices. Acru can use Mobile Marketing in several ways. Acru can use a combination of Bluetooth hubs, SMS, Apps, and even a service called eyemags to stay in touch with potential and existing customers. These services are designed to increase awareness and reach while keeping people informed about the latest events involving Acru. Events related to banking are also fair game for mobile advertising.

The Bluetooth hub is where Acru needs to start. The hub allows Acru to broadcast a SMS message to anyone that enters the radius of the hub. The caveat is that the person must first agree to receive messages from Acru, but that could be done in a host of different ways; a like on Facebook, the free coffee survey, joining Acru, etc. The Bluetooth hub can send out anything from a simple reminder that Acru is there to a web address that people may find relevant to their finances. The hub can be easily transported to events, where Acru can broadcast its SMS message to anyone that has agreed to receive messages from Acru. Again, the hub is designed to increase reach. People often sign up for SMS messaging from a business without realizing it. Even within the coffeeshop, there are 80% of the people in it that do not even know Acru exists. Just reaching them may spark interest in the company and provide new customers.

Apps can be used to increase awareness. By providing businessmen and customers with tools to monitor key financial elements, they begin to rely on that software for those needs. Acru simply brands

their logo and slogan somewhere in the app so that it's always visible and on the person's mind. Along the same line of apps is a tool called eyemags. Eyemags is an application that can be used via mobile devices and computers. It creates 10 page or less digital magazine, each page having a preset size limit that is very generous. The magazine is viewable on almost all mobile devices no matter the operating system. They can use the magazines on a monthly or even weekly basis to provide customers with the latest news. This news does not refer solely to Acru, but to the industry as a whole. Anything big that happens that may affect customers can be put in the magazine. The service is free of charge. Mobile Marketing ultimately helps achieve MCO's 1, 3 and 4.

QR Codes

The Big idea of QR codes revolves around increasing Reach and website traffic. The Table Toppers will also have QR codes on them. The QR codes are viral marketing. They can be tuned to link to any website, image, or anything else that Acru wants to link them to. The QR codes are a very new and popular way to interact with potential customers. Just by having them around, curious individuals will scan them and see what they link to. Combine them with the powerful videos that Acru has and they could become a very cheap, very viable way to market Acru. The QR codes can be made into stickers, coasters, or whatever Acru desires. In sticker form, Acru could have stacks of them that people can take and stick wherever they want. You never know where someone might put one or where someone might see one and decide to scan it. With QR codes, customers can come from anywhere. QR codes could even become event specific where any kind of fliers or freebies could have a QR code for Acru on them since Acru sponsors most of the events. Each time someone scans the code, they visit the Acru site (or Facebook page/Twitter Page/etc.).

The Table Toppers are all about increasing reach within the coffeehouse. Acru acknowledged that only 20% of people that enter the building even know what Acru is, and only 10% actually have some meaningful contact with Acru. By presenting customers with a link and QR code to visit a page on the Acru site and fill out a survey for a free cup of Copper Coin Coffee, they can build a database on coffeehouse customers and thus potential customers. A free cup of coffee is a great way to entice people to the website and make them aware that Acru exists. This will drive both web traffic and increase Reach.

As there are two MIC segments, Outsourcers and Optimizers that are either of high net worth or own local businesses, the QR codes can link to different pages on the site that might cater to one of the two segments. However, that can only be done if Acru knows in advance that an area will have one type of customer over another and that's unlikely. In general, the QR codes will be non-specific. They will be directed at increasing the overall number of people that visit the Acru website. Some of those people will likely be MIC's. The QR codes can be distributed at events. The codes given away as stickers or placed on other items can be released in a timed fashion. Every few months, release a new batch of them that link to new Acru pages or even to the website's splash page if they distribute them offsite. The Table Toppers and accompanying survey need to be released when the initial wave of QR stickers and items are released. Encouraging people to take the QR codes and stick them somewhere fun will help get people into it. Between the QR codes and the Table Toppers (with QR codes on them), increasing the number of unique page visits to 200 within 3 months is reasonable. Likewise, increasing

the reach of coffeehouse patrons by an additional 10% within one month could be easily done. QR codes strive to achieve MCO's 1 and 4.

Facebook

As the largest social media site in the world, Facebook can offer a tremendous value to Acru. Facebook is particularly valuable for business to consumer interactions. Through the implementation of a Facebook page, companies can connect with consumers and begin valuable information flow as well as two way conversations. For Acru, this is a chance to show that they are thought leaders; Acru can provide information not only relevant to the business, but they can also provide relevant information to consumers, such as any useful bits of knowledge that stem from news reports, or anything relevant to consumers and their money. Through the use of Facebook, Acru can provide an outlet for consumers to hear about events happening at the Acru location as well as any updates on services or information available on the website.

Acru currently has a strong customized landing page that is both visually impressive as well as entertaining an offer to sit down to a free cup of coffee and a clarity conversation with a Wealth Strategist. This page also embeds their video on YouTube to provide a very impressive first-time introduction. However, this landing page could still offer more information. The page is currently devoid of links to Acru's other Social Media web pages. Also, the profile picture is quite basic, as it only shows the Acru logo. Acru can take better advantage of this profile picture to quickly inform consumers of popular events that are currently taking place, for example, any in-house events that may be occurring in the month. It is important to realize that Facebook is not a place to attempt to sell to customers, rather than a place to provide valuable content and begin to engage both current and potential customers alike. Facebook helps achieve MCO's 1 and 5.

YouTube

YouTube is a popular outlet for videos to be posted for viewership and follower-ship. People can choose to "like" a video, as well as subscribe to the user who uploaded that video. Acru currently has a YouTube account, and they have posted their two videos to their account. These are very high quality videos, and they are both highly engaging and potentially of interest to potential customers. Currently, however, access to Acru's YouTube channel is denied. This means that users can not currently view any information about Acru through their YouTube page, and they can not choose to subscribe to Acru. Also, these videos do not currently cater to all 5 of the identified customer segments within the market. Acru needs to first open up their channel and provide information about themselves within the channel, as well as valuable links back to the Acru website. Once the channel is open and can be subscribed to by interested viewers, Acru can begin to create new content that would be of interest to other consumer segments in the market. Videos on YouTube can easily become viral when they generate enough interest, and Acru's videos could easily be shared amongst friends once the channel is opened up. These videos can also be incorporated within blog posts, and can also be linked to from the Facebook and other social media pages. Twitter helps to achieve MCO1.

Twitter

Twitter is a service to post and receive messages to a network of contacts. Instead of sending a dozen Emails or text messages, you send one message to your Twitter account, and the service

distributes it to all your friends. Members use Twitter to organize impromptu gatherings, carry on group conversations or just send a quick update to let people know what's going on. These quick updates are limited to a 140 character maximum

Twitter helps marketing efforts in numerous ways. First it helps to generate exposure. It helps to increase traffic and subscribers to customer touch points like a website, blog, or even an onsite event. Used properly, Twitter helps to generate qualified leads. It also helps marketers and ultimately companies to overcome obscurity and counteract ambiguity while battling indifference and to clarifying points of confusion. In and of themselves, each of these are critical for any competencies are critical offensive and defensive messages that must be conveyed to a customer to establish, grow and maintain market share.

Functionally, these aforementioned competencies are addressed in several ways. First, marketers can use keywords or company/brand names to see what's new. They can also use some of these same keywords to monitor what's being said about them. Twitter enables Acru and marketers to engage in two-way communication with their customers or prospective clients. Twitter allows Acru to provide ground level updates from open houses and events that they may be sponsoring. They can also re-tweet testimonials.

We've discussed many of the benefits that Twitter enables, however the importance of being strategic in its deployment, cannot be overstated. First, Acru must identify their target market and market to them. To their credit, Acru has done exhaustive work in identify their MIC, they must make sure that they put themselves in the right situations to reach them. To this point, they must do more research into the demographic characteristics of their MIC. From there, they should conduct a psychographic analysis to determine behaviors, activities, opinions, and interests of the MIC. After determining these commonalities, they should position themselves as a thought leader. Acru should encourage employees to Tweet and spread their message. They must be mindful to be consistent in relaying the brand message. Marketers can re-tweet positive messages. Acru can also benefit from doing joint promotional ventures with Copper Coin Coffee and other neighboring business that will ultimately drive marketers to their touch points. Twitter helps to drive blog interactions and website hits, MCO's 1 and 2.

Blogs and Video Blogs (Vlogs)

Acru currently has a blog; however, it is cluttered with posts introducing the Wealth Strategists at Acru. It is difficult to navigate to this page, and once a user is on the page, it is near impossible to tell that it is actually a blog. A further look into previous pages on the blog will show some blog posts talking about baseball and thinking strategically to create value. These posts are great and are quite engaging to people who enjoy these activities or may have their interest sparked by a potential opportunity.

First off, the Meet Your Wealth Strategist pages need to be moved to their own location on the website. These should not be incorporated into the blog pages. Next, Acru needs to make their blog more visible. There should be a navigation tab to the blog page located on the actual home page itself. This way people who view the site will know that the blog exists and will be able to take a glance at the content and potentially become engaged.

Finally, Acru needs to begin posting more regularly. A blog post every one to two weeks will be able to keep people engaged and potentially attract more people who are interested in some of the posts. Content should encourage people to post. Once people post, a conversation can be continued

with them. As with the Facebook pages, this is not a place to try to sell to potential customers. Blog posts are all about engaging an audience and providing them with valuable information. Once Acru can establish itself in a consumer's mind as a thought leader and a trusted advisor, people will then have Acru in mind the next time they need financial services.

In line with retaining the interest of the audience, Acru may not want to simply have all of their blog posts consist solely of text. The blog posts can also incorporate a variety of images. Not only that, but videos can be embedded within the blog to provide the functionality of a video blog, or vlog. Videos on the internet are typically more engaging than just simple text. Much like Twitter, blogs and vlogs drive MCO's 1 and 2.

Foursquare

Foursquare is a social media game that rewards people for "checking-in" to places they visit. Currently, both Acru and Copper Coin Coffee are listed on Foursquare and can be checked-in to. Copper Coin Coffee actually has a special available; 50% off your next drink for every 10th check-in. There is currently no cross-promotion taking place between Copper Coin and Acru via Foursquare and there is not an incentive to check-in at Acru. By having people excited to check-in to Acru, a social awareness can take place. People's friends who check-in will hopefully be intrigued by the Acru name to at least go to the website.

With the objective to raise local awareness of Acru, we recommend the encouragement of customers to check-in to Acru via table toppers and stickers promoting Acru as a check-in spot. Cross promotion is another thing that needs to be addressed for the Foursquare initiative to be completely successful. Acru can cross promote with Copper Coin by offering free a free coffee drink after the checking-in and having a clarity conversation with a wealth strategist. Also, Acru could run a promotion and award a prize to the person that becomes the mayor of Acru by a certain date. Even though there will be a cost to run the promotion (the prize), awareness will be raised by this simple contest. Finally, begin cross promoting with other local businesses via Foursquare. If a customer checks-in to Pure Taqueria and Acru within 2 hrs then they could receive something small from each venue. Again, giving something away in social media is the way to gain followers and run a successful campaign.

The major reason to encourage customers to check-in on Foursquare is the free analytical tools offered to venues from Foursquare. Acru can see a breakdown (demographically) of who their customers are that check-in. There are many data sets that can be extracted from Foursquare analytics and used in a marketing plan for Acru. Foursquare is designed to drive MCO 4.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional networking site that allows members to view other member's business bios and connect with each other. Currently, not all of Acru's Wealth Strategists are on LinkedIn. With small businesses being the MIC to Acru, it is imperative that all Wealth Strategists use LinkedIn to generate new leads but also keep in close contact with current clients. Most of the small business owners and decision makers will be on LinkedIn due to its scope. Also, Acru's company LinkedIn page is not up to optimal standards. There is only one employee listed as working for Acru that is on LinkedIn, which doesn't connect with the 3 others found on LinkedIn. By having a congruent message across all of LinkedIn, Acru can be seen as a better contributor to the LinkedIn community. On an individual basis, Wealth Strategists should all be connected to the same groups so that they can participate in discussions

and become thought leaders within these groups. By becoming thought leaders, Acru can show the LinkedIn community its value.

We recommend that all Wealth Strategists use LinkedIn with the exact same job description to keep information about Acru that is on LinkedIn the same. Also, coupled with all the other recommendations we recommend that Acru look to use the LinkedIn ads section. Acru can create a simple ad that runs on the right side of LinkedIn that is a pay per click advertisement. The ad can be narrowed down to only show up on LinkedIn member's pages within the local area Acru serves. By using LinkedIn more efficiently we feel that Acru can increase web traffic, increase event attendees, and reach more local businesses. LinkedIn is intended to help achieve MCO's 1 and 3.

11.0 Consumer Promotions

Consumer promotions is comprised mainly of special offers and give aways. Offers such as the 10% off a cup of coffee on the printed receipts, getting a free cup of coffee for filling out a survey on the website, and getting a free coffee for being a "mayor" on foursquare all fall under promotions. These promotions are intended to draw interest to Acru and create awareness by linking Acru with the coffeehouse, which is significantly more well known than Acru. The specifics of the promotions have been discussed in section 10.0 New Media. Increasing the awareness of the general public related to Acru's service offering should increase their customer base. Offering people free coffee or discounted coffee and associating that freebie with Acru is a great way to get Acru's name recognized by more people.

12.0 Budget

The budget for Acru is relatively light. However, the time investment is much heavier and may provide an opportunity cost that Acru is not willing to make. All social media recommendations require significant time investments. These investments cannot be quantified properly in terms of dollars and will therefore be excluded. However, Acru will have to consider the amount of time to give to each avenue. For Facebook, the proposed budget would be in the range of \$0 to \$1000 depending on if Acru hires a professional social media designer or does the work in house. Twitter is free, but costs time. Youtube and Vlogs are also free. However, the videos and equipment to make the videos will cost money. Production from a professional service can be very expensive as well. Bluetooth hubs can be purchased for \$200 to \$500 and the messaging services after that initial cost are free. Table Toppers should cost roughly \$100 and are easy to alter if done correctly. QR codes are basically as cheap as the paper and ink they are printed on. A bundle could be made for \$50 to \$100 depending on quantity and customization. Foursquare can range from free to \$20,000 depending on whether Acru wants "collectible" badges made. Direct response e-mails range from free to \$100 or more depending on if Acru does them in house or hires a professional service. Advertisements on receipts should cost no more than \$500. Linked in is free, but can cost more on a "pay per click ads" basis. Google Analytics is free for most content. Premium content is \$150,000 per year.

13.0 Measurement and Evaluation

In evaluating the five marketing communication objectives, non-subjective measures were sought. Subjective measures are avoided so as to obtain hard data that is easily analyzed. Once the data

is analyzed, Acru can refine their social media package and refocus efforts on the outlets that work the best. As almost all new media allows for direct tracking, Google Analytics will be recommended for most objectives.

To measure MCO 1, which was to increase website traffic to 200 unique visitors within 3 months, Google Analytics and simple tracking software such as Clicky are recommended. These allow Acru to see where people are visiting the site from to determine which new media outlets are garnishing the most unique hits to the main Acru website. MCO 2 was to increase blog interactions to 20 unique interactions per month. This can be tracked by calculating the number of new subscriptions per month. It can also be measured by counting the number of followers gained each month and how many posts are made by non-Acru members each month.

For MCO 3, reaching 15 local small businesses per month for 3 months through cross-promotion, a simple count of the number of small businesses touched through social media will confirm how many businesses were reached. To go a step further and determine how many became aware of Acru requires counting the number of unique posts and subscribers that were small business owners. This will likely need to be manually done unless Acru groups small businesses into some form of a group just for them.

MCO 4 was to increase the reach of daily coffeehouse patrons by 10% within 1 month as only 20% of the patrons were currently being reached. There are two ways to measure this. The first would be the traditional method of estimating unique visitors per month and counting how many received a message from Acru. The second way would be measuring the click through rates from Table Topper QR Codes and from Copper Coin Coffee Receipts. Both of these methods can be tracked via analytics software such as Google Analytics.

MCO 5, which was to increase Acru sponsored event attendance by 10% within 3 events, is best measured through exit surveys and traditional head counts. The events for now are small enough that head counts will work. In the future, Acru may choose to issue wristbands or tickets to keep track of how many people attend events if Acru significantly increases event attendance. Unless the surveys are transcribed to the web, analytics software really isn't usable. However, should Acru take the time to put the survey findings into a digital format, the data can be analyzed more effectively and the results can be used to tweak future events.

For each of the MCO's, analysis of the results are vital. By analyzing which methods are delivering the most results, Acru can refocus funding and personnel time to the social media avenues that work the best for the MIC segments. Likewise, the tracking may allow Acru to discern patterns and determine which advertising methods work best for each target segment. This will allow Acru to then tweak the specific ads to further target those segments. The cycle can continue in perpetuity.

14.0 Appendices – (Communication Chart, Media Plan, Online Plan, Etc.)

Direct Response E-Mail

Dear {Name}: (You should have your emails personalized. It's much more effective)

What's on your mind today?

--Tax Advice?

--Insurance?

--Wealth Management?

--Security and Risk Management?
--Banking?
--Financial Planning?

No matter what's on your mind, Acru keeps you informed—your way.

Want customized emails? No problem. Choose the news you'd like, and get daily updates with the content you need.

Prefer to browse our extensive database of articles online? Help yourself to an abundance of information and stay informed.

Want to see what our clients are saying about us? Help yourself to testimonials by customers just like you. We'll even arrange meetings for you to interact with some of our existing clients.

Keeping your eye on legislation for changes that will affect you directly?

Let Acru help you realize your financial goals and dreams

Don't miss another day, in just 6 months Acru is the choice for thousands of people throughout Cherokee and around the globe.

Knowledge is Power too, and providing it is our specialty.

Acru Professionals.

Click here to follow us or set up a complimentary consultation now.

Public Relations Statement

The u in Acru is a very good start. You want to be known as a customer/community centric contributor to your surrounding area. As a trusted advisor you'd like to highlight people who have benefited from your services and are willing to share their stories. This builds trust and confidence in your brand.

Highlighting specific customers can come in a quarterly newsletter and be featured on your website or blog. Ideally these people will follow you on Twitter and will feel comfortable posting testimonials. By becoming an information resource, people will receive your marketing efforts favorably. You'll benefit from word of mouth social marketing.

Receipt

Copper Coin Coffee

Receipt

(1)Espresso \$2.15
(1)Macchiato \$2.75
(1)Cappuccino \$3.25
(1)Cubano \$2.25

Total: \$10.40

10% off Special Offering

Get 10% off your next purchase by visting acruwealth.com online and following the prompts.

Table Topper

INSERT IMAGE IN MS WORD

QR Codes

INSERT IMAGE IN MS WORD

Mobile Marketing

INSERT IMAGE of Eyemags IN MS WORD

15.0 References

16.0 Footnotes